



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 May 2022

by S Hunt BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/Y/22/3295850

369 Highfield Road, Idle, Bradford BD10 8RS

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Matthew Dworakowski against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/04936/LBC, dated 25 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 December 2021.
 - The works proposed are replacement of windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. In the banner heading above, I have used the more concise description of the works as quoted on the appeal form. The works to the windows have been carried out therefore I am considering this appeal retrospectively.
3. As the proposal relates to a listed building and is within the Idle and the Green Conservation Area (IGCA), I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the works preserve the Grade II listed building, 369 and 371 Highfield Road (Ref. 1133095) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and the extent to which it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the IGCA.

Reasons

5. This appeal relates to 369 Highfield Road (No. 369) and the effect of the works on the special interest of the building as one of a pair of adjoining cottages. The List description indicates that No. 369 is a later addition to No. 371, which originates from the late 16th century. The two storey cottages are of simple design and constructed from traditional materials, primarily in local stone. The principal front elevation has well-proportioned three light window openings within black painted stone mullions and squared surrounds.
6. The special interest of the listed building insofar as it relates to this appeal derives from its historic construction and use of traditional materials. They contribute to its historic form and function which typifies workers housing of

the period in this area. I find that the mullioned windows in squared surrounds, which have been retained despite the more recent alterations to the windows, form a particularly distinctive component of its special interest. These elements reinforce the local character, appearance and distinctiveness of the area. Overall, the building has a positive appearance within the IGCA and this is noted with the IGCA Appraisal¹.

7. Having regard to the IGCA, there are numerous other listed buildings in the vicinity, and the collection of historic buildings and how they are experienced, which includes the appeal site, positively contribute to both the character and appearance of the area. The IGCA gains a large part of its significance from the propensity of workers' cottages which are of a similar age and construction to the appeal building. The appeal building abuts the footway of Highfield Road, and occupies a prominent and elevated position on this main thoroughfare through Idle.
8. The windows the subject of this appeal are fabricated from white uPVC. They comprise a mixture of top and side hung casements, with a fixed light to the central opening of the mullions. There are no photographs before me to illustrate the type of windows which have been replaced, but the appellant's evidence indicates that they were single pane wooden frames.
9. The chunky uPVC frames have given rise to very small amounts of glazing between them. Their cumbersome dimensions and variation in openings result in an appearance which is clumsy and inappropriate to the traditional narrow mullioned openings within which they have been inserted. Moreover, the smooth white finish of the frames and reflective double glazed panes fail to replicate the character of traditional timber windows. Together, these characteristics accentuate the inappropriate appearance of the windows and result in undeniable harm to the special interest of the listed building.
10. A discordant alteration to the principal aspect of a listed building that contributes positively to the IGCA must inevitably cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. In this particular location the appeal site is experienced amongst a group of historic buildings at this prominent location along Highfield Road. Here, the built form and historic materials, layout and design of buildings which line the street reinforce the local identity. The use of non-traditional window units represent a discordant addition to this group, having a wider negative impact and failing to preserve or enhance the IGCA as a whole.
11. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification.
12. In this case, the listed building would remain largely intact, though the mullioned window openings make an important contribution to the architectural and historic significance of the building. I find the harm to the designated heritage assets to be less than substantial, though the significant change to the

¹ Page 8, Idle and The Green Conservation Area Appraisal, February 2007 (City of Bradford MDC)

appearance of the listed building is a matter of considerable importance and weight.

13. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of the listed building. The appellant is of the opinion that benefits arise from improving the security of the property, and preventing water ingress to the building which consequently would improve the health of the occupiers. However, similar benefits could also be achieved via more appropriate and authentic replacement windows. Indeed, I note that the Council do not object in principle to replacement windows, and point to the approved timber sash windows recently installed to no. 371 as an acceptable alternative. Whilst I acknowledge that improvement of the housing stock would represent a public benefit, I find that this would be limited and clearly insufficient to offset the harm I have identified.
14. I note commentary within the appeal documents regarding windows which have been replaced within similar listed buildings along Highfield Road. The IGCA Appraisal also specifically notes the wide range of modern alterations, many of which have a negative effect on the character and appearance of the IGCA. It is unclear whether such works have been authorised. Regardless of the lawfulness of these alterations, they do not justify the harm that has been caused to the appeal building and I do not consider the installed uPVC windows to be an acceptable alternative.
15. I have also had regard to the range of appeal decisions quoted by the appellant², but it appears that the circumstances of each case vary considerably. The appeal property has characteristics relating to its design and materials which are specific to its locality, and therefore it would be inappropriate for me to make any direct comparisons to other decisions which are located nationwide.
16. I conclude that the works fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building and the wider character and appearance of the IGCA, to which I am required to have special regard and pay special attention by the Act. It follows that the works fail to comply with national policy outlined in section 16 of the Framework, together with policy EN3 of the Bradford Local Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document. This seeks to conserve the distinctiveness of architectural styles and palette of materials in the District, to ensure that alterations do not have any adverse effect upon the special interest of the building, and ensure such alterations are appropriate in terms of materials.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

Susan Hunt

INSPECTOR

² Design and Access Statement